

TRAILING 0-1 against Oxford City in Tuesday night's Rothmans Isthmian league encounter at Loakes Park, champions Wycombe Wanderers looked to be in real trouble. But a goal three minutes into the new period put them on level terms and set them up for victory in the later stages.

Wycombe will have mixed feelings about this performance — which puts them up into third place in the league table. For the first 45 minutes they rarely impressed against a revitalised and hard working City side who took a shock lead with the match just four minutes old. Then, with the wind in their favour, Wanderers suddenly put their game together and dominated the second half.

After two successive victories against Leatherhead and Chesham, I suppose it was on the cards that the Blues would have an off night. But few expected such a poor first half performance against Oxford, who are once again struggling in the league this season.

City, however, recorded an impressive 3-1 triumph at Bishop's Stortford last Saturday to add to their mid-week win at Hayes. These two victories certainly lifted the team and their sheer hard work and harassing certainly put the home side out of their stride. Never given a moment to settle by Oxford's constant running, Wycombe looked a very ordinary outfit.

Main problem was the passing which was often hurried and mis-directed. The defence also looked suspect after that early goal and with midfield harried constantly, the service to the front runners was obviously limited. One player who stood out, however, was Keith Searle.

Keith, who has had a hard time returning to his form of last season, carried on where he left off at Chesham last Saturday. Winning the majority of the ball in the air, he found enough time to combine in some fine attacking moves and also hit the important equalising goal. Another player to catch the eye was Gary Hand. Once again he was Wycombe's best defender while his left footed colleague Mick Holifield had his best game for a fortnight.

AUGURED WELL

A snap shot by Tony Horseman in the third minute augured well for Wycombe but just 60 seconds later, Oxford won the first corner of the game and immediately took the lead. Pete Dallaway's corner sailed to the near post where Neil Hartigan was allowed to glance a firm header through a static defence and into the net.

After this early set-back, Wanderers found it difficult to find any cohesion and Oxford's pressure constantly induced errors.

Wanderers eventually turned the tide but it took them just under half an hour to really threaten the Oxford net when first Steve Perrin nodded Searle's header over the crossbar and then Howard Kennedy sliced a shot wide. About the closest they came to an equaliser was in the 32nd minute.

to Horseman who nodded just over the top.

The half time comments in the dressing room must have done Wycombe the world of good, for they came out looking a completely different team and hit back to equalise after only three minutes of the new session. Brendan Barr cut out

brought the winning goal.

Perrin, who had a disappointing game overall, produced one piece of magic when his overhead cross found Horseman. "Bodger" fired in a shot which Harris just managed to push for a corner. Kennedy's kick was half cleared to Reardon who returned the ball

tinctly rattled. A great run across the box by Horseman should have brought a third goal after 72 minutes. But Perrin drove the cross high over the top. Five minutes later Steve hammered in a long range effort on target, but Harris saved well.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, A. Phillips, G. Hand; H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, M. Holifield; A. Horseman, K. Searle, S. Perrin. Sub D. Evans (not used).

OXFORD: P. Harris; B. Cooper, B. Barr, J. Woodley, A. Glass; K. Fagan, J. Tomkins (sub R. Parker 75 mins); E. Metcalfe; P. Dallaway, N. Hartigan, S. Atherton.

Referee: B. Robinson (Shepperton). **Half time:** 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Searle (48), Kennedy (65). Oxford — Hartigan (4).

Official paying attendance 995. **Approx. total attendance** 1,250.

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE

Division One											
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts				
Enfield	15	12	1	2	27	11	37				
Ilford	16	10	2	4	36	22	32				
Wycombe	15	9	4	2	24	12	31				
L'head	14	9	2	3	33	15	29				
Bishop's	16	9	1	6	27	20	28				
Sutton	14	8	1	5	21	17	25				
Tooting	11	8	0	3	17	11	24				
Dulwich	16	7	3	6	24	20	24				
Clapton	15	8	0	7	24	26	24				
Dag'ham	9	7	1	1	22	7	22				
Barking	15	7	1	7	25	19	22				
Hendon	18	6	4	8	23	29	22				
W'stow	14	6	3	5	25	21	21				
Kings	13	5	1	7	11	10	16				
Slough	15	4	4	7	17	22	16				
Oxford	12	6	0	7	14	19	15				
Woking	13	3	4	6	18	21	13				
Hitchin	12	3	2	7	18	24	11				
L'stone	11	3	1	7	11	17	10				
Hayes	15	2	4	7	14	28	10				
Walton	16	3	1	12	14	40	10				
Bromley	15	1	0	14	7	33	3				

Wycombe W. 2, Oxford C. 1 Report by STUART EARP

Perrin's cross at the expense of a corner and from Kennedy's flag kick, Alan Phillips headed on to the far post. Searle, left unmarked for a crucial second, made the most of the opportunity to crash the ball into the roof of the net from close range.

From their second corner in five minutes, skipper Phillips again won the ball in the air but this time referee Robinson blew for a foul on the 'keeper. Wycombe's intentions were now obvious and with Hand and Holifield both working the bottom wing effectively, the Blues mounted a string of attacks.

More aggression in midfield won them a constant flow of possession and kept Oxford pinned in their own half. Two rapid attacks inside a minute

towards the corner with an astute header. Kennedy lashed in a shot from this acute angle and although Harris got his fingers to the ball, the pace of the shot beat him and he could only help it into the net.

This was another example of Kennedy's power shooting paying dividends. It can be frustrating when his efforts sail into the crowd, but the true value of a player who is willing to shoot on sight can only be reflected in the goalscoring list. Howard is the top scorer with nine this season.

The second goal saw Wanderers playing some of the best football of the night. The passing improved 100 per cent and City, who had looked safe in the first half, were by now dis-

BARKING ON THE MEND

WITH three successive victories behind them, Wycombe Wanderers make the trip to Barking tomorrow (Saturday) in search of more Rothmans Isthmian League points. But their task will not be an easy one, for the Essex club are improving fast after a shaky start to the season.

Barking began their campaign with four defeats in five matches, but since then they have gradually improved and their last four results have been a 2-0 away victory at Walton, a 2-2 draw at Hendon, a 2-1 success at Slough and an identical score-line at home to Hitchin. Compared with last term, Barking are in a stronger league position.

Their other results this year are: Clapton (H) 0-1, Walthamstow (A) 0-1, Leytonstone (A) 3-

0, Enfield (H) 1-2, Hitchin (A) 1-3, Bromley (H) 2-0, Bishop's Stortford (A) 1-2, Bromley (A) 3-0, Hendon (H) 1-3, Walthamstow (H) 5-0, Enfield (A) 0-3.

Barking, who went professional at the start of the season have four newcomers from last term. Joe Fascione, the former Fulham and Durban City player signed on with Charlie Williams (ex-West Ham), Peter Burton (Yorks. Amateurs) and Liam Joaghin. They joined such players as Gwynne Walters, a Welsh international, and Mal Crissell, the top goal-scorer with eight this season.

Wanderers will probably field the same side as against Oxford

which means Alan Phillips, the captain, will play despite suffering from a leg injury which has been affecting his game recently. Dave Bullock, the other centre half will be out for at least a fortnight.

Laurie Cole, the Chesham United goalkeeper who joined Wycombe a month ago has been released by the club. Cole, who played only two friendlies for the Blues, was unable to make Tuesday night matches due to business commitments and is expected to re-join Chesham.

Wycombe, without a league game on Tuesday, have arranged a friendly against Oxford University at Loakes Park. In the Oxford side will be Tony Price who left Wanderers at the start of the season and has been making a big impression with the University side this term.

Terry Reardon's pass ricocheted off a defender and Searle ran through a surprised defence almost to the bye-line. From this acute angle the centre forward hammered in a shot which 'keeper Peter Harris managed to turn onto the upright. The ball rebounded out